

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3670

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 23077

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, CB, US

SUBJECT: IENG SARY VISIT TO THAILAND

1. IN A MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 3, FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHOONHAWAN SAID HE FELT THE RECENT VISIT OF CAMBODIAN DEPUTY PREMIER IENG SARY HAD BEEN MOST SUCCESSFUL. ALTHOUGH THINGS WERE NOT QUITE AS SMOOTH AS THEY APPEARED ON THE SURFACE, HE FOUND IENG SARY RELATIVELY MODERATE AND FAIRLY SOPHISTICATED. THE CAMBODIAN DEPUTY PREMIER DID NOT RAISE THE PROBLEM OF CAMBODIAN PLANES WHICH FLED TO THAILAND ON THE COLLAPSE OF THE FORMER GOVERNMENT AND, BEYOND ONE PASSING REFERENCE TO IMPERIALISM, DID NOT ENGAGE IN COLD WAR RHETORIC.

2. CHATCHAI SAID HE SAW TWO MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE VISIT. FIRST, THE TWO COUNTRIES AGREED TO RESUME DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. EMBASSIES WOULD NOT BE ESTABLISHED IMMEDIATELY, ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD FOLLOW IN DUE COURSE. FOR THE PRESENT, CONTACT WOULD BE MAINTAINED THROUGH A THAI LIAISON OFFICE AT ARANYAPRATHET AND A SIMILAR OFFICE AT POIPET ON THE CAMBODIAN SIDE OF THE BORDER. SECONDLY, THE TWO NATIONS HAD AGREED TO EXPAND TRADE RELATIONS. IENG SARY DID NOT WANT THAI AID BUT VERY MUCH WANTED THAI PRODUCTS. AS A
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RESULT, THEY HAD AGREED TO INSTITUTE A SYSTEM OF BAR-

TER TRADE UNDER WHICH THAILAND WOULD PROVIDE RICE, CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL, OIL AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND CAMBODIA IN RETURN WOULD SEND LOGS AND FISH TO THAILAND.

3. CHATCHAI SAID HE FOUND IENG SARY AND HIS COLLEAGUES MUCH MORE MODERATE AND COOPERATIVE THAN THE VIETNAMESE OR LAOTIANS. HE FELT THIS WAS DUE IN PART TO THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHINESE WHO MET WITH THE CAMBODIAN DELEGATION AFTER EACH THAI-CAMBODIAN SESSION.

4. CHATCHAI STRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE U.S. TO ADOPT A MORE FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARD CAMBODIA. IT IS ESSENTIAL, HE SAID, FOR THE U.S. TO TAKE A FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE AT THE OUTSET RATHER THAN HANGING BACK UNTIL EVENTS MIGHT FORCE CAMBODIA TO BECOME MORE RADICAL AND TURN MORE TOWARD HANOI. AS ONE WAY IN WHICH THE U.S. MIGHT BE RESPONSIVE, CHATCHAI URGED THAT WE MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE PRESENT CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT, THE DISTRESSED CARGO NOW LOCATED IN THAILAND. THE AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED TO HIM THE LEGAL AND OTHER REASONS WHY THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE AND URGED THAT THE CARGO BE RELEASED TO US IMMEDIATELY FOR ULTIMATE DISPOSITION.
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